

40-Year Employee Remembers When . . .

EDITOR'S NOTE: Donald Love, pathology, is the longest term employe at Duke Hospital. He recounts the opening months at the Hospital in this article.

By Donald Love

On a Monday morning about 40 years ago—June 2, 1930, to be exact—I walked into Duke Hospital for my first time.

I hadn't even seen the building until then. In fact, I didn't even know if it was the right building. Of course, this was the only one I could see on this end of the quad.

The construction was incomplete save a few areas here and there in the Hospital section. Construction men were everywhere—on the outside, on the inside, on the top and swinging from the outside walls.

I had come to the Hospital for a job that I got through my father, John Love, who operated a printing machine on the East Campus for many years. There were many hospital forms which had to be printed. He and Dr. W.C. Davison were acquainted through working together on these forms over a lengthy period of time leading up to the opening date of the Hospital.

My father spoke to Dr. Davison about a job and he agreed to give me one when the time came. My father told me to go to the Hospital on that Monday and Dr. Davison would be expecting me to begin work.

I didn't know Dr. Davison nor did he know me. I was told by the construction workers that I could find him in the basement.

I entered. My first stop was at the telephone headquarters and a nursing area right in front of the elevator in the basement. Many electric sewing machines were in the telephone room. On the right side of the room were many tables made from high wooden horses with slabs on them and on the tables were lots of blueprints.

I waited and finally Dr. Davison came. He took me on a tour of the Hospital, the Medical School and the tower at the end of the Medical School. This building was a great mass of cement and stones. I knew I would never learn my way around in this giant of a building!

Getting Ready to Open

There were heads in certain points working to have their part ready or nearly so by opening dates: Miss (Marion) Batchelder in the operating room, Miss (Mildred) Sherwood on Howland, Miss (Elsie) Martin in dietetics, Mrs. (Carrie) Sykes in the sewing room, Miss (Bessie) Baker in nursing, Dr. (E.P.) Alyea in urology, Dr. (Watt) Eagle in ear, nose, and throat, Dr. (Deryl) Hart in surgery, Dr. (H.L.) Amoss in medicine and Mr. (Marcellus) Winston, the first superintendent in administration.

Everybody worked hard and together. Everybody knew everybody. It was a united effort on a united front. There was a lot to do in a short time and not much help to do it.

The medical school was a way off from opening. Most time was spent getting the Hospital area ready. Dr. (Francis) Swett was working in anatomy, Dr. (Wiley) Forbus in pathology, and Dr. (William) Perlzweig in biochemistry.

Mrs. Sykes was interested in getting materials made for certain areas in the Hospital. Miss Baker was interested in many things such as getting certain ward supplies made in the



DOORSTEP DELIVERY SYSTEM—When the Medical Center was under construction, building materials and supplies were brought to the site by a special train. This photo was taken in 1928 looking toward the main quadrangle from what is now the Davison Building. To the right is the partially completed Duke Chapel.

sewing room, hot water bags, ice bags and throat bags made, different kinds of binders and, above all, ward curtains. Miss Batchelder's interest were table covers, ether boats, face masks and many others things.

One problem for the nursing heads and the sewing room was designing a Duke cap for the nurses. They designed a very nice looking cap. These caps for many years were made in the sewing room. These sewing women were superb.

My tasks were many also. They included readying a ward for use. Curtains had to have gromets for hanging, the ward area had to be cleaned, dusted, doors and transoms polished. The tasks were many and great, so some of the construction workers I knew played a big part in helping. Had it not been for them, I don't know what would have happened.

The hospital storeroom was under the supervision of Jim Patton. His duties were getting beds and mattresses in their places. There were hospital beds and intern beds with certain kinds of furniture for each with two kinds of pillows, hair and feathers.

The linen was my responsibility. Two pillow cases, two sheets, one spread and one blanket for each bed. On the ward, three sheets (two large and one draw sheet), one spread, one bath blanket, one face, bath and wash cloth.

More People to Help

I finally got some help for myself. Ernest Pratt, who was just a kid then, Hazel Lyons and others. We had to check-in laundry which was done locally, then fill requisitions for the wards and deliver.

We also had the responsibility of housekeeping. Many times the sewing rooms would get behind on ward needs, such as binders. I was called in to help there. Had a special machine I used. I became very good. We finally got more help.

About this time, we were able to get one orderly, Bert Justice.

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